

2 July 1973

NSA review completed

MEMORANDUM

Recent Communist Logistical and Manpower
Developments in IndochinaSummary

There was little change in the pace of Communist logistic and manpower activity during the week. Supply movements in the Laos Panhandle have been pre-empted by the rains, while activity continues in both the North Vietnam Panhandle and the northern regions of South Vietnam. Similarly, personnel infiltration remained at the low level of recent weeks.

- . The resupply campaign in northern South Vietnam extending from 11 through 25 June moved large quantities of supplies to NVA units in the area, and evidence of heavy Communist vehicle activity in the area continues to be received.
- . Unconfirmed evidence indicates the possible presence of a new Soviet radar system which would significantly upgrade North Vietnam's air defense capability.
- . A new North Vietnamese division -- the 341st -- has been identified in the North Vietnamese Panhandle.

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DISCUSSION

Recent Logistical Developments

Substantial levels of logistic activity continue to be observed in the North Vietnam Panhandle. Most of the supply movements are between storage facilities subordinate to Binh Tram 18 in the Vinh area. Intercepted communications on 20 June detailed the transfer of over 170 tons of ammunition between two such locations, and on the same date, a shipment of about 20 tons of explosives and gasoline was dispatched to NVA units in northern Laos. Recent ^{also} communications/indicate that the North Vietnamese are continuing to maintain large ordnance stockpiles around Vinh. For example, a 22 June communique indicated that the recipient of a 20 June shipment could only "accept" 1,700 tons of 57-mm antiaircraft ammunition because it already had 1,600 tons on hand. Farther south, Binh Tram 26 is sustaining vehicle activity similar to that observed in recent weeks. COMINT from a subordinate bridge and ferry company on the Troc River south of Quang Khe indicated that 101 vehicles (65 southbound) passed through its area on 22 June alone.

In other developments, the North Vietnamese apparently have recently upgraded their air defense capability with

a more sophisticated Soviet-made radar system. Radar signals intercepted on 25 June indicated the probable presence at Phuc Yen airfield near Hanoi, of the TALL KING system, an early warning radar having a significant long-range, high-altitude capability. This radar probably has been supplied to North Vietnam since the signing of the ceasefire accords in January.

In Southern Laos, Communist resupply activity continues at a very low level. A low altitude, night visual reconnaissance mission [] covering Routes 99, 25X1- 96, and 958 south from Muong Nong and Route 96/110 in the tri-border revealed only 43 vehicles traveling on this extensive stretch of roads. Construction activity on various sections of the Panhandle road system is continuing, however. There are now an estimated 50 miles of road undergoing improvement, and as much as 30 miles of that distance have already been completed.

Information from pilot reports and photo reconnaissance over eastern Cambodia indicates that considerable night-time Communist truck and waterborne traffic continues on the major supply routes. Most of the traffic was observed on the Mekong and Tonle Kong Rivers south from the Laos border. [] photography of Route 19 and GVN

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Route 613 in northeast Cambodia showed both to be in good condition and sustaining light to moderate traffic despite recent rains.

Intercepted Khmer Communist messages continued to reflect concern about food and munitions supply problems in southern Cambodia, although evidence indicates that the difficulties are being resolved. Several messages this week alluded to weapons and ammunition shipments en route to or arriving at KC locations south of the capital. One such message was an order to transport 100,000 rounds of small arms ammunition from an unknown point in the southwest to the Takeo battlefield.

Recent COMINT from northern South Vietnam points to the apparent success of the NVA transportation campaign there which extended from 11 through 25 June. One element subordinate to Binh Tram 12 reported on 22 June that it had already completed "103% of the assigned quota". Additionally, on 27 June a major NVA storage facility located on Route 548 reported that it had some 4,400 tons of cargo in storage, about 2,500 tons of which had been "recently received". Although the bulk of the cargo shipped during the campaign remains unidentified, most of that detected was foodstuffs and related items. COMINT

also

/indicates that heavy Communist vehicle activity is continuing in the North. The unidentified NVA unit operating in the Cua Viet River area, which has previously reported very high levels of vehicle movement, stated on 28 June that it had received 209 vehicles and dispatched 259 on that date. Another unit operating on Route 548 reported receiving 160 vehicles on 27 June, and aerial photography taken of this route on 28 June showed 183 vehicles present.

Some of the current logistic activity is probably related to Communist efforts to establish civilian settlements along the new western supply corridor. Photography

25X1 [] revealed that seven villages containing a total of more than 100 huts had been erected in the A Shau Valley since mid-May. South of the A Shau, []

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[] North Vietnam is providing construction materials for the []

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[] in and around the town of Ben Giang, located at the junction of Routes 614 and 14 in western Quang Nam Province. Reportedly, the new residents will continue receiving food supplies for about six months, and thereafter are expected to be self-sufficient.

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Communist agricultural programs are reportedly also

underway in the B-3 Front. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Viet Cong elements there were receiving daily shipments of farming equipment, including plows, tools, generators, water pumps, and rice processing machines. Additionally, the VC reportedly had received bulldozers in early June which were being used to clear roads and farmland. This clearing activity in Darlac Province has been confirmed by aerial reconnaissance.

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In southern South Vietnam [REDACTED] that "difficulties" in obtaining rice from Cambodia led COSVN in mid-April to direct its subordinate rear service groups to develop rice sources within South Vietnam and to begin supplying food to main force units only. At the same time COSVN reportedly instructed province and district level units to become self-sufficient in foodstuffs. Although in past months increasing amounts of supplies have reportedly been purchased in this region by the Communists, their self-sufficiency campaign has not been entirely successful. A former member of a VC battalion reports that his unit was unable to resupply itself while operating in Binh Duong Province. Following a request for aid, however, the VC unit reportedly began to receive rice delivered from Cambodia.

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Note on Northern Laos

After a long hiatus in reporting from NVA logistic units operating in northern Laos, recent fragmentary evidence indicates that some resupply activity is still in progress there. Aerial photography over Route 7 (crossing the northern Plaine des Jarres) showed the road muddy but passable. About 50 new buildings have been built at Ban Ban and a three-span wooden deck bridge 50 feet in length has been built on Route 7 west of the city since the Laotian ceasefire. Intercepted Communist communications indicate that a storage depot near Nong Het east of Ban Ban received over 300 tons of rice during the period 1 through 20 June, and a report from Binh Tram 11, operating on the Laos/North Vietnam border along Route 7 stated that it had nearly 700 tons of rice and about 60 tons of gasoline in storage as of 24 June.

Recent Manpower DevelopmentsPersonnel Infiltration

During the past week, there were no regular combat infiltration groups detected in the pipeline. Six special-purpose groups, however, were observed at the top of the system in North Vietnam, while three other small groups were noted farther south in the Laotian Panhandle. The aggregate strength of these nine groups is about 150 personnel. The following table compares the number of North Vietnamese troops who have started the journey south since 1 September 1972 with those who were inserted into the pipeline during the comparable period a year earlier.

Table 1
Infiltration Starts, By Season

<u>Destination</u>	<u>1 Sep 71- 2 Jul 72</u>	<u>1 Sep 72- 2 Jul 73</u>
Total	136,000	94,000
MR Tri-Thien-Hue	35,000	33,000
MR 5	17,000	9,000
B-3 Front	30,000	14,000
COSVN	38,000	26,000
Southern Laos/MR 559	16,000	12,000

Since the implementation of the cease-fire in South Vietnam on 27 January, total infiltration is estimated at approximately 51,000 personnel -- 26,000 who started south since then (20,000 of which were combat troops) and 25,000 who were in the pipeline as of that date.

Table 2

Number of Personnel Entering the Pipeline
Since 1 January 1973

	<u>Total</u> ¹	<u>Special-Purpose</u> ²
January	20,500	1,600
February	10,200	2,100
March	3,250	2,250
April	1,925	1,200
May	7,175	300
June	1,675	600
July (1-2)	0	0

1. Including gap-filled groups, except Groups 7001-7009 and 5057. Assuming that these groups departed after 1 January, about 5,000 combat troops would be added to the infiltration starts shown above.

2. Including those groups which were initially detected without a specific strength but which have been assigned an average strength of 235.

Manpower Developments in North Vietnam

Recent COMINT has indicated the reemergence of the 341st NVA Division -- last noted in 1968 -- in North Vietnam's Military Region (MR) 4. The initial reference to a "341st Division" occurred in late April and during June there were several additional references which substantiated the division's existence. Historically the 341st Division was organic to MR 4 during the mid-1960's and operated in an area between Nghe An Province in North Vietnam and northern Quang Tri Province in South Vietnam. During that period the 341st Division engaged in a variety of functions, including combat, coastal defense, infiltration support, and training. At an unknown point since 1968, however, the 341st probably was disbanded as a divisional entity. The current mission and function of the division is unclear and it is possible that only the headquarters and staff -- rather than the entire division -- were regenerated, in order to control existing forces in southern North Vietnam. If the entire division has been reconstituted it probably will remain in MR 4 performing at least one of its historical functions..

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